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A LEADING UNIVERSITY AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

SIR,—Mr. T. J. Baker's article on "American Literature in the Colleges" which appeared in the June REVIEW is very much to the point at this time of "reconstruction" which we hope will include the abolition of some of our inconsistent, superficial and artificial standards. It is well to be reminded that we should not aspire to be a second edition of English culture as our colonial ancestors were, but that we have a distinct reaction from those sources of Americanism of which Mr. Baker gives such examples as "the frontier," "the Southern plantation" and "the New England farm."

But Mr. Baker knows nothing about the English Department of the University of Pennsylvania for then he would not write: "in our leading universities not only Lowell, but other American writers are neglected." As a single example of lack of neglect he says, "at Harvard Bliss Perry devotes a half term to Emerson."

At the University of Pennsylvania Professor G. H. Quinn, also Dean of the college, gives a course on *Poe and Emerson*. There is a two-term course in *American Literature*. After taking this course the undergraduate knows Benjamin Franklin, Jonathan Edwards, Cooper, Irving and Poe, "the one American great in the short-story, poetry and in criticism," as other than mere names. He also knows Joseph

Hopkinson wrote satires on George III that lessened the Revolutionary soldier's dread of and respect for His Majesty and that Freneau wrote invectives on our first President. Lincoln's speeches, too, are studied, and the writers of the New England school, of whom I think Professor Quinn would like us to rank Lowell first and Holmes second. I remember definitely the *Commemoration Ode*, read in class.

Contemporary literature, Edith Wharton, Thomas Nelson Page, Margaret Deland, George Washington Cable, is studied in the second half of the course.

Drama in America is another course, also *The Novel in America*, in all, five courses are offered. I hope Mr. Baker is not one of that type of intellectual-snob that would leave "Penn" out of a serious study of our *leading* universities.

PHILA., PA.

MARTHA MCAVOY.